

Press Release

Lilli Hollein will take over as MAK General Director tomorrow on 1 September 2021

“The role of applied arts and design has never been more important than today,” the new head of the MAK states

On taking office, the new MAK General Director, Lilli Hollein, refers to diversity and the opening of the museum to a broad audience, innovative concepts of communication for the MAK and its unique collection, an exchange with many voices from the national and international avant-garde of contemporary designers and artists, forced feminist and less Eurocentric perspectives, as well as an openness for pop-cultural topics as her key concerns for the museum with a rich tradition on Vienna’s Stubenring. Tomorrow on 1 September 2021, Hollein will take over as General Director of the MAK together with Chief Financial Officer Teresa Mitterlehner-Marchesani.

“Lilli Hollein is predestined for her new job as General Director of the MAK. For her start, I wish her a lot of vigor and success. I am convinced that Lilli Hollein will further the Museum of Applied Arts artistically, in internationally relevant ways, and sustainably through courageous management, strategic and operative foresight, creativity, and successful team work. I am looking forward to the collaboration and many inspiring artistic and cultural experiences,” Andrea Mayer, State Secretary for Arts and Culture, states.

With its exceptional, internationally renowned collection of objects from—among other fields—arts and crafts, art, design, graphics, architecture, and fashion, the MAK reflects the design of our living environment all the way to everyday objects we are daily surrounded by. Lilli Hollein aims to strengthen this special position of the MAK Collection, which grew over 150 years and bridges the gap between cultural history and current living conditions and products.

“In a special way, the MAK has the potential of addressing a diverse audience with a democratic and open offer. My ideas of orienting the MAK towards the pressing, current socially relevant topics of our society are forming against this background: integration and diversity, participation and equality, environment and innovation, as well as sustainability,” Hollein explains.

Lilli Hollein plans to promote the concepts for exhibitions and events as well as the further development of the MAK Collection and the research activities linked to it in an

intensive dialogue with designers and artists: “Expanding the MAK on all levels from a contemporary point of view and in an exchange with the art and design avant-garde is a task I am very much looking forward to. The MAK must prove excellence with regard to questions of design.”

In the new General Director’s vision, the MAK is a place that matters not only to artists but to many people. The audience is to represent the diversity but also contradictions of our society and encounter an accordingly wide ranging offer with regard to topics and communication. Consequently, a clear focus of the future work of the museum will be placed on a new diversity in addressing the target groups and in communicating the MAK content.

“I am convinced that the role of applied arts and design has never been more important than today. Design has a moderator function, it shapes social processes as well as products and desires. You have to face this responsibility with attitude, courage, and innovation. The MAK aims to stand for exceptional design and the responsibility of art and design for a sustainable, positive future of our society. I am looking forward to contributing to conveying the importance and power of applied arts to a broad audience and to positioning this wonderful museum as an active, diversely communicating, and internationally cooperating institution together with the entire team of the MAK,” Hollein concludes.

Lilli Hollein studied Industrial Design (University of Applied Arts Vienna) and is co-founder of the VIENNA DESIGN WEEK, which she headed until May 2021. As a curator, she developed exhibitions on architecture and design. In 2007, she was commissioner of the Austrian contribution at the São Paulo Architecture Biennale. Hollein developed the VIENNA DESIGN WEEK, which has been taking place in changing locations in the city every year in early autumn since 2007, to become Austria’s largest curated design festival with an international standing. Lilli Hollein has published extensively in national and international media, trade magazines, and catalogues, given speeches, and participated in panels. She was chairwoman of the supervisory board of the MAK and a member of the the board of trustees at the Mumok. As president of the jury of the KÖR Wien, she was involved in numerous decisions for art in the public space. She regularly functions as member of the jury in the fields of architecture, design, and fine arts.

As the first female General Director of the MAK, she is succeeding Christoph Thun-Hohenstein who headed the MAK from 2011 to 2021 and repositioned it with regard to the Digital Modernity and eco-social questions, for example, as the initiator and head of the VIENNA BIENNALE founded in 2015.

Teresa Mitterlehner-Marchesani has been Chief Financial Officer of the MAK since 2016. In 2019, the museum achieved the most successful results since 2006 under her leadership. 2020, the challenging year of the pandemic, also closed financially sound.

Lilli Hollein will present details of her plans for the coming years at a press conference in December.

Portrait photos for download at [MAK.at/en/press](https://www.mak.at/en/press)

MAK Press and PR

Judith Anna Schwarz-Jungmann (Head)
Sandra Hell-Ghignone
Ulrike Sedlmayr
T +43 1 711 36-233, -229, -212
presse@MAK.at
[www.MAK.at](https://www.mak.at)

Vienna, 31 August 2021